

Clark County Is Oldest In State; Formed In 1845

Clark county bears the honor of being the oldest county in the state of Washington. First organized on August 18, 1845, it was named for Capt. William Clark, one of the leaders of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Lewis county, which was formed in December of the same year, took its name from the other leader of the expedition, Capt. Meriweather Lewis. When first organized, Clark county was the most populous spot in the state of Washington. In 1860 it was "home" to 2,637 people, fewer people than are now employed in the Crown Zellerbach mill. Walla Walla county, spurred by the Whitman mission, passed this area by the time the 1870 census was taken, but Clark county records show 3,081 people lived within its borders in that year.

By 1880 the population was 5,490, just a few more than within the the Camas city limits. In the next ten years the number of people nearly doubled to 11,709. At the turn of the century 13,479 men, women and children lived in the area.